

this bird did not return and no other small bird was seen there, it was not possible with certainty to establish the identity of the host. According to Brown "The cuckoo fell silent for a few minutes after I returned to my seat. It then called again repeatedly for about a minute, and fell silent again for a further few minutes. At 0712 it again began to call repeatedly; at some time during this second silence it had turned round on the nest, though I did not see it actually do this. After over a minute of continuous calling, it again relapsed into silence; but very shortly after, called three or four times and then abruptly flew away". He was able to watch the cuckoo through binoculars at close range for quarter of an hour. No other cuckoo was seen or heard in the vicinity at the time, nor did he hear any answering calls to those from the bird on the nest. Unfortunately, he did not look on the ground below the nest to see whether an egg had been ejected. As Brown was due back there in a week he left the cuckoo egg in the hope of making some further observations, but when he returned the egg had disappeared and the nest was empty and deserted. There was no trace of any egg on the ground below.

This is a particularly valuable observation as it is an additional record of an unusual type of *C. solitarius* egg which has (*l.c.*) been recorded from Southern Rhodesia, from the Belgian Congo (oviduct) by Chapin (<sup>2</sup>: 190), and *vide* (<sup>3</sup>: 68) figured by Nehr Korn and said to come from 'Massai-land' in East Africa. A *C. solitarius* egg from the nest of the Cape Wagtail, *Motacilla capensis* sent me from South Africa is pale greenish heavily marked with shades of brown and may link the previously described spotted or freckled egg with the well-known normal type which is so profusely and finely marked as to appear almost immaculate.

#### References:

<sup>1</sup> Pitman, C. R. S. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, 81 (3) 48-49, 1961.

<sup>2</sup> Chapin, James P., *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, 2, 1939.

<sup>3</sup> Friedmann, Herbert, *The Parasitic Cuckoos of Africa*. Washington Academy of Sciences, 1948.

## Nesting materials used by *Cisticola juncidis* (Rafinesque)

by DEREK M. COMINS

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The nest of *Cisticola juncidis* has been described by Lynes (1930, 79) as:—  
 ". . . of soda-bottle type . . . with entrance facing *skywards*; made by binding together a large number of soft green grass blades with plant fibres and cobweb, and lining copiously with plant down . . . In its materials, the nest of *juncidis* more or less resembles those of other Cisticolae, but the type of architecture and particularly the skyward entrance hole is quite unique and identifies the owner with certainty."

A nest (E.L. 8833) donated to the East London Museum by Mr. R. A. Bode of Idutywa, Transkei, Cape Province, agrees in appearance with the above description. The nest is 11 cm. in height; the diameter is 5 cm. at the base and 3 cm. at the apex; the diameter of the entrance hole is 2.5 cm. The nest is suspended (the base being approximately 5 cm. from ground level) in a living tuft of *Eragrostis curvula*. The walls and base of the nest consist of a thin tissue which binds the inner surfaces of the grass leaves. The leaves are not laterally contiguous: threads of material from the nest are laced round the leaves at intervals.

It was noticed that there is a crimp in the material at the apex of the nest. In view of the fact that no reference is made by Lynes (1930) and Vincent (1948) to the use of wool by *Cisticola juncidis* in nest construction, material from the nest was forwarded to the South African Wool Textile Research Institute for determination. The material was found to consist (definitely) of wool and (by comparison) spider-web and hair which was thought to be from the pappus of *Asclepias fruticosa*.

The use of wool in addition to spider-web in the construction of the nest of this *Cisticola* is of interest for Skead (1959, 278) has described a similar phenomenon in the case of the Cape Penduline Tit [*Anthoscopus minutus minutus* (Shaw and Nodder)]. In both cases the use of wool reflects the availability of this material due to the advent of wool-farming in the areas concerned, together with a degree of plasticity in the choice of nesting material by the birds.

I wish to thank the Director of the East London Museum for placing the nest of *Cisticola juncidis* at my disposal. I am indebted to the Director (per Mr. L. A. Kerley) of the South African Wool Textile Research Institute for identifying the nesting material.

#### References:

- Lynes, H., 1930. Review of the Genus *Cisticola*. *Ibis*, 6: 673 pp.  
 Skead, C. J., 1959. A Study of the Cape Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus minutus minutus* (Shaw & Nodder). *Ostrich*, Suppl. No. 3, 274-287.  
 Vincent, A. W., 1948. On the Breeding Habits of Some African Birds. *Ibis*, 90: 284-312.

## On birds new for New Guinea or with a larger range than previously known

by A. HOOGERWERF

(continued from page 124—October 1964)

30 & 31. *Gallinago megala* Swinhoe and *G. hardwickii* (Gray)

Pin-tailed and Japanese Snipe

Both these species of snipe were not as yet known from the western part of south New Guinea, but about Kurik in the wet ricefields as well as in the seasonal swamps between the Kumbe and Bian Rivers we saw them regularly during the rainy period.

In April 1962 very often snipe were observed in Kurik's North polder, almost exclusively on fallow ricefields covered with grasslike and other vegetation. In May 1961 as well as in 1962 they were in those paddyfields and in 1962 even as late as 5th June a specimen was seen, flying so well that we did not suppose that it was a wounded or otherwise handicapped bird. On 17th August, 1960 the first snipe of that season was observed in the South polder!

Representatives of this genus were also recorded near Manokwari and in the Kebar Valley (about 500 m. above sea level, Vogelkop) and according to Gyldenstolpe 5) both these species were also secured in the Western Highlands of Central Papua whereas *G. megala* is mentioned for the Wissel Lakes area by Junge 9).

Though I am fairly convinced that in most cases it was the larger *Gallinago hardwickii* which I observed (of which two specimens were secured) it is certain that *G. megala* also occurs in south New Guinea